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Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-11 IO-13 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05
SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 L-03 ACDA-12
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FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1217
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY DAKAR PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LOME PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BANGUI
AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY MONROVIA
AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE
AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

S E C R E T LIBREVILLE 1682

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR PINS CG GB
SUBJECT: AFRICAN TROOPS IN SHABA

REF: STATE 150529
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1. GABONESE PRESIDENT BONGO APPEARS TO BE MORE ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT
COMMITTING TROOPS TO THE SHABA AFRICAN FORCE THAN HIS OTHER COLLEAGUES

AND IS LIKELY TO BE MORE RELAXED ABOUT BRINGING THEM BACK. HE WILL
NO DOUBT, HOWEVER, WANT TO BE ASSURED BY SOMEONE AS TIME FOES ON THAT
HIS TROOPS ARE SUPPORTED AND THAT THERE IS A FINITE LIMIT TO THEIR

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PRESENCE IN SHABA. IN THIS CONTEXT, BONGO PROBABLY WOULD BE
WILLING TO COORDINATE GABONESE TROOP RETURN WITH PROGRESS IN
TRAINING FAZ BY FRENCH AND BELGIANS.

2. IN AS MUCH AS AGRICANS WENT TO SHABA PRIMARILY AT THE
INSTIGATION OF THE FRENCE, AND GIVEN OUR THUS FAR SUBORDINATE
ROLE, IT SEEMS TO US THAT ANY CONSULTATIONS CONCERNING USG ROLE
FOLLOWING AIRLIFT AND ESPECIALLY WITH REGARD TO ONGOING SUPPORT
PER PARA 3 REFTEL SHOULD BEGIN WITH THE FRENCE AND PROBABLY THE
BELGIANS. WHEN WE KNOW WHAT THE FRENCH AND BELGIANS ARE PREPARED TO
DO AND WHAT IN ADDITION WILL BE REQUIRED,(WE DOUBT THAT OAU IS
LIKELY AUTHORIZE ANY UNDER ITS AEGIS), WIDER CONSULTATIONS
WITH AFRICANS WHO HAVE SUPPLIED TROOPS AND EQUIPMENT WOULD MAKE
SENSE IF THEY HAVE NOT ALREADY REQUESTED THEM THEMSELVES OT ASKED
OUT. WE THINK BONGO WOULD BE WILLING TO PARTICIPATE AND THAT HE
MIGHT EVEN BE WILLING TO ORGANIZE CONSULTATIONS IF HE HAD SOME
ASSURANCES THAT EVERYONE WOULD ATTEND. IF SUCH COURSE WERE TO BE
FOLLOWED, FRENCH WOULD BE LOGICAL CANDIDATES TO CARRY THE BALL
WITH BONGO. SUCH CONSULTATIONS MIGHT TAKE PLACE IN ANY OF THE
CAPITALS INCOLCED BUT PREFERABLY IN ONE WHERE ALL OTHER HAVE
EMBASSIES.

3. RE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL REFORMS, WE ARE NOT WELL
PLACED TO KNOW WHAT MOBUTU HAS AGREED TO OR WHAT HE IN PRACTICE
CAN DO, BUT WE CAN SEE SOME POTENTIAL VALUE IN A CABAL OF FELLOW
CHIEFS OF STATE, WHO ARE ALSO PROVING SUPPORT, APPLYING SOME
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PRESSURE ON HIM OVER DURATION THEIR DIRECT INVOLVEMENT. BONGO,
ALTHOUGH CLOSE TO MOBUTU, HAS CRITIZED HIS POLITICAL TACTICS
IN THE PAST AND MIGHT BE WILLING TO ASSOCIATE HIMSELF WITH COME
STRAIGHT TALK ABOUT REFORMS COMMUNICATED BY SOME OR ALL OF THE
OTHER SHABA FORCE PARTICIPANTS.

4. SUPPLEMENTING CONSULTATIONS WITH RATHER LIMITED GROUP OF
AFRICAN COUNTRIES ALONG ABOVE LINES, WE CAN SEE MERIT IN
SERIES OF BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS WITH OTHER INTERESTED
PARTIES OR IMPORTANT ACTORS SUCH AS ZAMBIA, SUDAN, NIGERIA AND
LIBERIA. THIS WOULD BE MOSTKY A DAMAGE CONTROL OPERATION
AIMED PRIMARILY AT KEEPING SHABA OPERATION FROM BECOMING
CONTENTIOUS ISSUE AT KHARTOUM RESULTING IN ATTACKS ON THOSE
STATES WITH TROOPS IN SHABA.TIENKEN

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